

Wildfires - A Real Threat

Homeowners that live near Florida's forests, rural areas or remote sites enjoy the beauty of the environment but face the very real danger of wildfire. Wildfires often begin unnoticed, spreading quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes. Every year, wildfires burn thousands of acres of grasslands and forests in Florida. The summers of 1998 through 2001 were particularly bad years for wildfires. Lack of rain caused drought. Drought made the trees and plants very dry, and made the wildfires even worse. Reduce your risk by preparing now - before wildfire strikes. Meet with your family to decide what to do and where to go if wildfires threaten your area.

When Wildfire Threatens...

If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your battery-operated radio for reports and evacuation information. Follow the instructions of local officials.

- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows.
- Leave the key in the ignition.
- Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked.
- Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Confine pets to one room.
- Make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.

If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

- Wear protective clothing - sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and handkerchief to protect your face.
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Lock your home.
- Tell someone when you left and where you are going.
- Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.

If you're sure you have time, take steps to protect your home

- Inside:**
- Close windows, vents, doors, Venetian blinds and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains.
 - Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.

- Open fireplace damper. Close fireplace screens.
- Move flammable furniture into center of the home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.

Outside:

- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Place combustible patio furniture inside.
- Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
- Set up the portable gasoline-powered pump.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
- Wet or remove shrubs within 15 feet of the home.
- Gather fire tools.

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